

**Solid Waste Advisory Committee
Meeting Summary
October 6, 2004**

Solid Waste Master Plan Review

This was the first of three SWAC meetings scheduled to solicit input and recommendations from the group regarding the review and revision of the *Beyond 2000 Solid Waste Master Plan* (SWMP). John Fischer led the group discussion on two main sets of topics:

- No Net Import/Export Policy and capacity issues, and
- Waste reduction goals and strategies.

Background Assumptions

Background assumptions for the discussion included:

- Capacity projections as stated in the 3rd Annual Progress Report,
- Level funding at FY04 funding levels for DEP's solid waste programs, and
- No net increase in solid waste staffing.

Attendees also suggested that DEP provide some additional information to refine DEP's background assumptions, including:

- Consider estimating other potential landfill capacity in DEP's capacity projections (i.e., maximum build-out capacity of existing facilities beyond capacity currently in permitting pipeline, inactive landfill closures)
- Provide a summary of current DEP solid waste staffing, functions and funding numbers.

In proposing comments and recommendations, DEP encouraged participants to think in terms of what DEP's role should be and what influence DEP can have. DEP also encouraged participants to think about what role other solid waste stakeholders should play with respect to these issues.

Capacity Issues and No Net Import/Export Policy

- Most participants felt that the no net import/export policy should be eliminated.
 - Participants argued that the policy does not reflect the reality of regional waste disposal markets and that the policy has not worked in terms of meeting in-state capacity need and taking responsibility as a state for managing our own waste. It also was suggested that the policy leads many to believe additional disposal capacity should be sited without first thinking about new waste reduction capacity.
 - Those who supported the no-net import/export policy stated that it is important to ensure that Massachusetts has sufficient capacity to meet in-state need so that we are not dependent on regulatory and price fluctuations in other states. It also was suggested that capacity regulation is a good tool for promoting waste reduction.
 - It was suggested that need for in-state capacity development should be considered separately from the no net import/export policy.

- Several participants felt that DEP would need to take a more active role in developing capacity if the policy is to be successful. Without such a role, it does not make sense to continue the policy and capacity decisions should be left to the market.
- It was suggested that, before deciding to eliminate the policy, DEP should reconsider why the policy was implemented and ensure that eliminating the policy would not jeopardize those goals.
- Participants agreed that capacity analysis should account for recycling and composting capacity and recommended that DEP develop a more complete capacity analysis that takes into account recycling and composting capacity and how fully existing capacity is being used. An improved understanding of the complete solid waste management system would inform decisions over what capacity the state needs.
- Participants made extensive comments on the role that Boards of Health play in the solid waste facility site assignment process.
 - Many participants felt that Boards of Health inappropriately limit the siting of solid waste facilities, including recycling and composting facilities. These participants felt that DEP should either provide training to local officials on different types of solid waste facilities to better inform local decision-making or that DEP should pursue legislation to increase state authority and limit local authority for solid waste facility siting. The state's 40B affordable housing program was cited as a potential model.
 - Others argued to keep the current siting process and keep local BOH authority strong because Boards of Health serve as an important check to protect local communities from the impacts of solid waste facilities.
- It was suggested that DEP should consider planning appropriate infrastructure and waste capacity for disaster management needs (e.g., biohazard event).

Waste Reduction Strategies

- Several participants stated that it is important for DEP to maintain a high, aggressive waste reduction goal.
- Past DEP efforts have had positive impacts, and DEP can make a difference in increasing waste reduction.
- DEP should continue to focus on providing assistance to municipal officials to implement PAYT programs and to educate residents about PAYT. DEP should consider proposing legislation to mandate PAYT.
- DEP needs to focus on statewide public education efforts to educate the general public about recycling and why it is important.
- DEP should continue to focus on increasing business recycling. As part of this, DEP should look at extending waste ban enforcement to haulers and waste generators to raise the expectations for businesses to recycle. The solid waste industry cannot force businesses to recycle, but if government establishes a strong policy framework, businesses and the solid waste industry will work together to increase recycling.

- DEP should pursue further producer responsibility agreements, both voluntary agreements like the carpet agreement and through legislation. One example mentioned was trying to work with companies that send out large catalog mailings to better target those catalog mailings.

Meeting Handouts and Presentations

- Meeting Agenda and Discussion Questions
- Excerpts from Chapter 16, Section 21, statutory language regarding the Solid Waste Master Plan

Next SWAC SWMP Review Meeting

The next SWAC SWMP Review Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 20, 2004, from 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. at DEP, One Winter Street, Boston.